

the concern that is to perform the contract meets the applicable standards for responsibility. However, the contracting officer shall consider the affiliate's past performance and integrity when they may adversely affect the prospective contractor's responsibility.

(d)(1) *Small business concerns.* If a small business concern's offer that would otherwise be accepted is to be rejected because of a determination of nonresponsibility, the contracting officer shall refer the matter to the Small Business Administration, which will decide whether or not to issue a Certificate of Competency (see subpart 19.6).

(2) A small business that is unable to comply with the limitations on subcontracting at 52.219-14 may be considered nonresponsive.

[48 FR 42142, Sept. 19, 1983, as amended at 53 FR 27463, July 20, 1988; 53 FR 34226, Sept. 2, 1988; 56 FR 55378, Oct. 25, 1991; 60 FR 48260, Sept. 18, 1995; 61 FR 67410, Dec. 20, 1996; 62 FR 44820, Aug. 22, 1997; 63 FR 70267, Dec. 18, 1998; 65 FR 80264, Dec. 20, 2000; 66 FR 66989, Dec. 27, 2001; 67 FR 13068, Mar. 20, 2002]

9.104-4 Subcontractor responsibility.

(a) Generally, prospective prime contractors are responsible for determining the responsibility of their prospective subcontractors (but see 9.405 and 9.405-2 regarding debarred, ineligible, or suspended firms). Determinations of prospective subcontractor responsibility may affect the Government's determination of the prospective prime contractor's responsibility. A prospective contractor may be required to provide written evidence of a proposed subcontractor's responsibility.

(b) When it is in the Government's interest to do so, the contracting officer may directly determine a prospective subcontractor's responsibility (e.g., when the prospective contract involves medical supplies, urgent requirements, or substantial subcontracting). In this case, the same standards used to determine a prime contractor's responsibility shall be used by the Government to determine subcontractor responsibility.

9.105 Procedures.

9.105-1 Obtaining information.

(a) Before making a determination of responsibility, the contracting officer shall possess or obtain information sufficient to be satisfied that a prospective contractor currently meets the applicable standards in 9.104.

(b)(1) Generally, the contracting officer shall obtain information regarding the responsibility of prospective contractors, including requesting preaward surveys when necessary (see 9.106), promptly after a bid opening or receipt of offers. However, in negotiated contracting, especially when research and development is involved, the contracting officer may obtain this information before issuing the request for proposals. Requests for information shall ordinarily be limited to information concerning (i) the low bidder or (ii) those offerors in range for award.

(2) Preaward surveys shall be managed and conducted by the surveying activity.

(i) If the surveying activity is a contract administration office—

(A) That office shall advise the contracting officer on prospective contractors' financial competence and credit needs; and

(B) The administrative contracting officer shall obtain from the auditor any information required concerning the adequacy of prospective contractors' accounting systems and these systems' suitability for use in administering the proposed type of contract.

(ii) If the surveying activity is not a contract administration office, the contracting officer shall obtain from the auditor any information required concerning prospective contractors' financial competence and credit needs, the adequacy of their accounting systems, and these systems' suitability for use in administering the proposed type of contract.

(3) Information on financial resources and performance capability shall be obtained or updated on as current a basis as is feasible up to the date of award.

(c) In making the determination of responsibility (see 9.104-1(c)), the contracting officer shall consider relevant past performance information (see subpart 42.15). In addition, the contracting